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INSTRUCTIONS

AND

ADVICE

TO

CATHOLICKS,

UPON

OCCASION

OF THE LATE

EARTHQUAKES.

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INSTRUCTIONS and ADVICE to CATHOLICKS, &c.

1. NO ſerious Chriſtian can doubt but that earthquakes, whenſoever they happen; and whatſoever cauſes may bring them about, are indeed the handy work of God. All nature is his handmaid; and the whole creation is ready at his beck to take arms to revenge his cauſe upon his enemies. *Wiſd.* v. 18. And we find upon examination, that the moſt dreadful of his judgments, are uſually executed by natural cauſes, which he makes the inſtruments of his juſtice.

2. Earthquakes are juſtly looked upon as indications of the wrath of God, enkindled againſt his people by their ſins. So the holy fathers underſtood them, [St. *Gregory* Homily 35.] So the church underſtands them in her collects appointed to be read on thoſe occaſions. They are reckoned up by our Lord himſelf amongſt the *beginnings of ſorrows*, the forerunners of the laſt and moſt dreadful judgment of God upon impenitent ſinners. St. *Matthew* xxiv. 7, 8.

3. We have then too much reaſon to apprehend that theſe late earthquakes are tokens that God is at preſent angry with us: and that the ſword of his juſtice is actually hanging over our heads; and threatening us with the worſt of his judgments. And what elſe indeed, can any one expect, who ſeriouſly reflects on the multitude and enormity of

the blaſphemies, perjuries, and other crying ſins, that are ſo common amongſt all ſorts of people: ſins more heinous in the ſight of God, than the very crimes that drew down his wrath upon *Sodom*: and committed with ſo much audaciouſneſs and impunity, as if it were in defiance of heaven: beſides that general lewdneſs, injuſtice, profane ſwearing, and other vices which every where reign, together with an utter contempt of all religion, and profanation of all that is ſacred. And though we flatter ourſelves that thoſe who are of the houſhold of faith are much more free than their neighbours, from the generality of theſe crying evils: yet, when we conſider their ſins in another light, as committed with greater knowledge; and by them that have been more highly favoured; and as attended too often with a ſacrilegious abuſe of our moſt tremendous myſteries: we cannot but apprehend an aggravation in them, which is exceedingly provoking in the ſight of the Almighty, whoſe judgment uſually begins at his own houſe, 1 *Peter* iv. 17. and the execution of his juſtice at his own ſanctuary, *Ezek.* ix. 6.

4. But as we are convinced on the one hand, that our ſins cry aloud for juſtice; and that it is purely owing to the incomprehenſible patience and forbearance of our good God, that we have not long ſince been utterly deſtroyed: as innumerable cities have been, that in all appearance were not half ſo guilty: ſo, on the other hand, we cannot but look upon ourſelves, as highly indebted to his infinite goodneſs, that inſtead of commanding us to be ſwallowed up on a ſudden under all our guilt, he has ſent us theſe late ſhocks as merciful warnings, to withdraw us from our ſins, by the apprehenſion of his impending judgments, and ſo bring us, like the *Ninivites*, to a ſerious converſion, and change of life.

5. We

5. We are then threatened indeed, as *Ninive* was: but, through the mercy of God, may eſcape as *Ninive* did: if, like *Ninive*, we take warning from theſe indications of the divine wrath, and turn in like manner from our evil ways. 'Tis what the church of God invites all her children to do at this penitential time: *To turn to the Lord with their whole heart, with faſting, weeping, and mourning.* Joel ii. 12. *To ſeek the Lord whilſt he may be found, to call upon him whilſt he is near*, Iſai. lv. 6. To forſake their evil ways, and to do penance for their ſins; leſt otherwiſe they be ſuddenly overtaken by death, and ſeek time for penance, and not be able to find it. Our preſent dangers ought now at leaſt to awaken us to give ear to theſe preſſing calls of our common mother.

6. The firſt thing then we are to do in conſequence of theſe warnings of heaven, is to turn to God with our whole heart, by a ſerious ſpeedy and effectual repentance. This God calls for, this the church of God calls for: without this (as ſhe perpetually inculcates, and every child amongſt us knows) no abſolution given by man can be to any other effect, but to add the guilt of ſacrilege to the reſt of our ſins.

7. We think it our duty then, at this time, as *ambaſſadors for Chriſt*, to addreſs ourſelves to all you whom God has committed to our charge, earneſtly to beſeech you to be *reconciled to God* once for all; to turn from all your evil ways; to come now to the feet of *Chriſt*, and there bewail and confeſs your ſins, and there lay them down for ever: to join, in a body, to offer a holy violence to heaven, by faſting, alms, and prayers, to lay aſide the pomp and pride of your ornaments, to retrench your worldly ſenſual pleaſures, and put on both the habit

and

and ſpirit of true penitents. Leſt if you neglect theſe calls and warnings of heaven, you be quickly overtaken in your ſins. Remember there is but a hair's breadth at any time betwixt the ſinner and hell: and that nothing ſooner draws down judgments, than the abuſe of mercy, and the contempt of the threatenings of heaven.

8. In the mean time, in order to avert the wrath of God, and draw down his mercy; we ordain that all prieſts, in the holy ſacrifice of the altar (except upon feaſts of the firſt claſs) after the collect or collects of the day, add the collect againſt earthquakes, and continue ſo to do till the end of *May* next: and that in the publick chapels after veſpers, and complin, on ſundays and holidays, and after the complin or benediction on the week days, A *miſerere* pſalm be ſung for the ſame intention, with the verſicles and reſponſes uſed in the ferial veſpers of lent, and the four firſt prayers of the litany. And we earneſtly recommend to all the faithful, to be diligent in aſſiſting at theſe devotions; and in their own family prayers, to add daily the ſame penitential pſalm, in order to implore the divine mercy.

Ex Miſſali Romano.

Tempore terræ motûs.

ORATIO.

OMnipotens ſempiterne Deus qui reſpicis terram & facis eam tremere: parce metuentibus, propitiare ſupplicibus: ut cujus iram terræ fundamenta concutientem expavimus, clementiam contritiones ejus ſanantem jugiter ſentiamus, Per Dominum noſtrum, *&c.*

SECRETA.

SECRETA.

DEUS qui fundaſti terram ſuper ſtabilitatem ſuam, ſuſcipe oblationes & preces populi tui, & trementis terræ periculis penitus amotis, divinæ tuæ iracundiæ terrores, in humanæ ſalutis remedia converte: ut qui de terra ſunt, & in terram revertentur, gaudeant ſe fieri ſanctâ converſatione cœleſtes, Per Dominum noſtrum, *&c.*

POSTCOMMUNIO.

TUERE nos, Domine quæſumus, tua ſancta ſumentes; & terram, quam vidimus noſtris iniquitatibus trementem, ſuperno munere firma, ut mortalium corda cognoſcant, & te indignante talia flagella prodire, & te miſerante ceſſare, Per Dominum noſtrum, *&c.*

The ſame in Engliſh.

I. *COLLECT.*

O Almighty and everlaſting God, who lookeſt upon the earth, and makeſt it tremble: ſpare them that fear thee, ſhew mercy to them that cry to thee: that we who have apprehended thy wrath, ſhaking the foundations of the earth, may experience thy clemency in healing all its breaches. Through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt* thy Son, *&c.*

SECRETA.

O God, who haſt founded the earth upon its own baſes, receive the oblations and prayers of thy people:

people: remove entirely from us dangers of earthquakes, and turn the terrors of thy wrath, into medicines for our ſalvation: that we who are of the earth, and muſt return again to the earth, may have the happineſs to become heavenly by a ſaintlike converſation. Through our Lord *Jeſus Chriſt*.

POST COMMUNION.

PRotect us, O Lord, we beſeech thee, who partake of thy holy ſacraments: and by thy heavenly hand fix the earth, which we have ſeen trembling for our ſins: that the hearts of mortals may be ſenſible that ſuch ſcourges as theſe proceed from thy anger, and ceaſe by thy mercy. Through our Lord, *&c.*

FINIS.